



Where to go... in one day

(introducing "Tha Kha Floating Market"
in Samut Songkhram Province)





Samut Songkhram is a province with a long history. A lot of temples and archeological sites from the Ayutthaya period can still be seen there. Several of these remain in good condition. People in Samut Songkhram have a simple way of life. They are hard-working and kind. They strongly believe in religion and tradition, as can be seen from a large number of temples built in almost every village. These temples are beautifully decorated in a unique architectural style of rural Central Thailand. A visit to Samut Songkhram and an observation of the way of life of people living along canals bring a pleasure which is hard to find in present-day society.



Tha Kha Floating Market

This floating market is a new tourist attraction which reflects the traditional Thai way of life of Samut Songkhram people along the river. People in Samut Songkhram have travelled and carried on their business by boat as there are a lot of rivers and canals in this province. Tha Kha Floating Market is in Klong Phanla, Tambon Tha Kha, Amphoe Amphawa. It is a floating market where local people and those from nearby provinces buy and sell their products in their paddle boats on six specific days each month. You can buy a variety of produce, daily necessities, food and sweets here from hundreds of boats, starting from 7 a.m. to after 12.00.

To go to Tha Kha Floating Market, drive along Highway No. 325 (Samut Songkhram - Bang Phae) as far as the 32nd milestone. After the entrance to Ko Kaeo Temple, you will see the entrance to Theprasit Temple. Turn into this road and drive for about 5 kilometres and you will get to Tha Kha Floating Market.

Interesting Nearby Attractions

Tao Tan

Tao Tan is a palm-sugar producing place situated between the 30th and 32nd kilometres along Samut Songkhram - Bang Phae Road. Palm-sugar production is one of the main jobs of people in this province. Here you can see how they make sugar from coconut sap. Palm sugar as well as other local products, especially those made from coconut shells, can be bought here. The demonstration of coconut-sugar production is presented from 8.30 to 12.00. Five different "Tao-Tans" which tourists enjoy visiting are Tao Tawan, Tao Tandil, Tao Thawi, Tao Kalong and Tao Thaidoem.

As for palm sugar, generally called "Nam Tan Piip" (canned sugar) is made from coconut flowers. Agriculturists call the flowers "Nguang or Chan Ma Phrao". Fresh sap (Nam Tan Sot) is obtained from the flowers when the coconut is about 3-4 years old. The process of making palm sugar starts when the coconut flowers. Agriculturists will collect the sap by cutting the flowers. When they are cut, the sap will drip into a bamboo cup or an aluminum cup attached to the coconut tree just under the flowers. The cut flowers cannot bear fruit.



The agriculturists will climb up the tree by using a single bamboo-stem ladder or by stepping on the cuts in the tree trunk.

A 2-3 gram stick of phayom [*shorea floribuda* (*dipterocarpaceae*)] is put in the cup to prevent the fresh sap from going bad. The bamboo cup will be collected twice a day - in the morning and in the evening.

When there is enough sap to simmer, the sap will be strained to get rid of the stick and other foreign matter. The stove for simmering is specially designed. It can hold five big pans at the same time. It has a hole to put fuel in and a chimney to improve incineration. The commonly used fuels are dried coconut branches, firewood, rice husks and coconut shells.

Each pan can hold 1-2 big cans of fresh sap. The sap in the pan which is directly over the fire will boil down first. Agriculturists will take the sap from other pans to add to the first pan. The sap will be left on the fire for about 30 minutes. When it boils, the bubbles will be scooped out or a coop-like structure is put over the pan for about 10 minutes or until the sap stops boiling over. After that the sap is left to simmer for 15-20 minutes. When it is done, it is stirred to dry. It takes a man about 7-10 minutes to stir it dry or a fan about 5 minutes to blow it dry. Finally, it is canned for sale.

Orchid Farm

It is on the Samut Songkhram - Bang Phae Road in Amphoe Amphawa. It is an attraction well-known for orchids and beautiful butterflies. Besides, souvenirs and other items are for sale. It is open 8.00 - 11.00 a.m.



■ Tao Tan

Ban Bencharong

It is on Samut Songkhram - Bang Phae Road. Quite a long way from Amphoe Muang, there is a turn on the left. Turn left (for 300 meters) into Ban Bencharong where beautiful polychrome chinaware is produced. This colorful artistic design in Thai style is a great souvenir and a beautiful home decoration. Visitors are also welcome to make a study tour of the chinaware production process.

King Rama II's Royal Commemorative Park

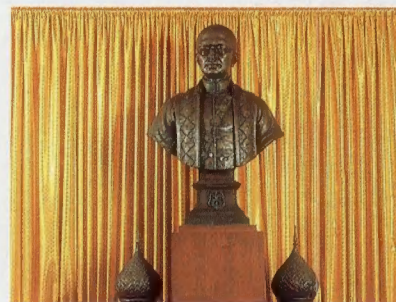
This project honouring King Rama II by the King Rama II's Royal Commemorative Foundation under the King's patronage was undertaken to express gratitude that King Rama II had provided exquisite art and cultural creations as an inheritance for the nation. The construction area of eleven rai, which is actually King Rama II's birthplace, was donated to the present King by Phra Ratsamutmethi, the Abbot of Wat Amphawanchetiaram.

One interesting building inside the Commemorative Park is King Rama II Museum. It comprises four Thai style buildings exhibiting artifacts and showing the Thai lifestyle during the reign of King Rama II. The Central Hall houses the statue of the King and other archaeological objects. The Male Sleeping Quarters exhibits the lifestyle of Thai men, whereas the Female Sleeping Quarters shows that of Thai women during that time. Other characteristics of traditional Thai homes are also evident in the displays of the open porch, Thai kitchen, and bathrooms of the Thai middle class. Moreover, there are also an outdoor theatre, an orchard growing various fruit trees mentioned in Thai literature, a souvenir shop near the parking lot selling local products and fruits, and the river bank at the end of the park.

In order to go to the Park, take Highway No. 35. Turn right into the Highway No. 325 at the 63rd



■ King Rama II's
Royal Commemorative Park





■ *Ban Bencharong*



■ *Atsana Wihan
Mae Phra Bang
Koet*



milestone for six kms. past Samut Songkhram Province to the Park (there are signs along the way.) The Park is open every day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The museum opens Wednesdays-Sundays from 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. On museum days it costs 5 baht per person for children and 10 baht per person for adults. On days the museum is closed, it is 5 baht per person for both children and adults.

At-sa-na-wi-han-mae-phra-bang-koet (Church of the Virgin Mary)

It is situated at Moo 7, Tambon Bang Nok Khwaek, Amphoe Bang Khonthi. This is the sacred place of worship for over 400 Christian families living in the area. It was built in 1890 by Father Paulo Salmon, a French missionary. It took him six years to complete this French Gothic building. This church is considered the oldest in Thailand. Several artistic creations inside the chapel worth studying are the stained glass, sculptures, pulpit, baptismal font, various candle sticks, and carvings depicting historical accounts in the Bible which are rarely seen in Thailand.

To get there, take the Samut Songkhram-Bang Nok Khwaek Road. Follow this road until you pass the junction leading to Somdet Phra Amarin Bridge. Continue for another 100 metres. You will see from a long way off Atsana Wihan Mae Phra Bang Koet on your left.

The Fish Park at Wat Charoen Sukharamworawihan

The Fish Park is situated at Tambon Bang Nok Khwaek, 5 kilometres from Amphoe Bang Khonthi. There are many kinds of fish in the pond, especially silver barb, red-tail tinfoil barb. In addition to the pleasure of watching many types of fish, tourists can enjoy the beautiful scenery along both sides of the canal. At Wat Charoen Sukharamworawihan, Luang Pho To, the main Buddha image in the temple, is widely worshipped. The seated Buddha image carved from laterite in the attitude



■ *The Fish Park at Wat Charoen Sukharamworawihan*

of subduing Mara, is of the Sukhothai period.

The width from one knee to the other is about 178 centimetres and the length from the seat to the crown is 208 centimetres. To get there, take the Samut Songkhram-Bang Nok Khwaek Road past Atsana Wihan Mae Phra Bang Koet. Cross the Bang Nok Khwaek Bridge and take the right fork and follow the road for about 500 metres, you will get to Wat Charoen Sukharamworawihan.

Bang Kung Camp

Bang Kung Camp is situated at Moo 4, Tambon Bang Kung, Amphoe Bang Khonthi. It was a navy camp whose name appears in the Thai chronicle. It was a place of military importance, where many heroes of Mae Klong emerged during the late Ayutthaya period and the beginning of Thon Buri there, at this camp. King Taksin the Great led a group of brave Thai-Chinese soldiers to fight against the Burmese until the Burmese army was defeated. It was one of the Thai camps which greatly intimidated the Burmese army.

Bang Kung Camp had been deserted for almost 200 years. Until 1957 The Ministry of Education turned the camp into a boy scout camp in order to honour King Taksin the Great, and built a joss-house as a memorial to the King. This joss-house was established on June 20, 1958.

Inside the compound of Bang Kung Camp are also situated temples, chapels and the old Bang Kung Temple. In the past this temple was built in the middle of the camp as a center to hold the spirit of and to be worshipped by the soldiers. There were two Bang Kung Temples: Bang Kung Yai Temple and Bang Kung Noi Temple. Today there remains only the chapel and Bang Kung Yai Temple. Bang Kung Noi Temple had deteriorated until it became deserted. There remains only its chapel on the small hill in the middle of the camp. This chapel has survived due to the roots the Boh and banyan

trees holding it. Inside the chapel, there is a huge main Buddha image made of plaster. People called this image "Luang Pho Bot Noi". On the walls of the Chapel there are paintings of the late Ayutthaya period depicting the history of the Lord Buddha. Nowadays Bang Kung Noi Temple has become part of Bang Kung Yai Temple and they are called Bang Kung Temple.

To get to Bang Kung Camp, take the Samut Songkhram-Bang Nok Khwaek Road. Before you reach Atsana Wihan Mae Phra Bang Koet, turn left on to the Somdet Phra Amarin Bridge. After crossing the bridge, turn left and continue for 10 kilometres. You will find Bang Kung Camp on your left.

Restaurants En Route

Chang Phueak 2 Moo 5 Tambon Bang Chang,
Amphoe Amphawa
Tel. (034) 725-414, 725-541

Bang Khae Pier On Samut Songkhram - Bang
Nok Khwaek Road, Tambon
Bang Chang, Amphoe
Amphawa

Pornsawan On river bank, by the old
Amphawa District Office

Thanthip On Samut Songkhram-Bang
Nok Khwaek Road, Tambon
Bang Nok Khwaek, Amphoe
Bang Khonthi

Lai Khram Entrance to Wat Kaeofa, Samut
Songkhram-Bang Phae Road

Rim Nam On Samut Songkhram-Bang
Nok Khwaek Road, diagonally
opposite PTT gas station,
Amphoe Bang Khonthi,
Tel. 01-454-8383

Example of a One-day Tour

Program 1

07:30	Leave Bangkok
09:00	Arrive at Samut Songkhram Visit Tao Tan
09:30	Visit Orchid Farm
10:00	Visit Tha Kha Floating Market
11:00	Continue on Samut Songkhram-Bang Nok Khwaek Road
11:30	Visit Atsana Wihan Mae Phra Bang Koet
12:00	Lunch
13:00	Continue on Rama 2 - Ban Phaeo-Phra Prathon Route
14:30	Arrive at the Rose Garden, Nakhon Prathom Province Watch the fascinating cultural show
16:00	Return to Bangkok

Program 2

07:30	Leave Bangkok
09:00	Arrive at Samut Songkhram Province Visit Tha Kha Floating Market
10:00	Visit Tao Tan
11:00	Visit King Rama II's Commemorative Park
12:00	Lunch
13:00	Ready for further travel
14:00	Visit Bang Kung Camp
14:30	Leave
15:00	Arrive at Church of Virgin Mary
15:30	Arrive at Wat Charoen Sukharamworawihan
16:00	Leave
16:30	Arrive at Wat Phet Samutworawihan
17:00	Leave
17:30	Arrive at Don Hoi Lot Dinner Arrive safely in Bangkok

▲ The Fish Park at Wat Charoen Sukharamworawihan

Atsana Wiha Mae Phra Bang Koet

Bang Kung Camp

Samut Songkhram - Bang Nok Khwaek Road

325

Tha Kha Floating Market

Samut

Songkhram - Bang Phae Road

Orchid Farm

Tao Tan

King Rama II's Commemorative Park

Ban Bencharong

325

Wat Phet Samut

Mae Klong River

City Hall

Thon Buri - Pak Tho Highway

Don Hoi Lot



NOT TO SCALE

Major tourist attractions in Samut Songkhram

